Farm Mobilization FACT SHEET

No. 3-- Farm Scrap Drive September 1951

FARMERS ASKED TO COOPERATE IN SCRAP DRIVE

Farmers in the United States have been asked to cooperate in every way possible with the Nation's drive to gather all available scrap for steel production so essential in defense mobilization. At the request of the National Production Authority, the Department of Agriculture is lending its support to the drive and is using its facilities for informing farmers about scrap needs. The drive will be concentrated between the dates of October 15 and November 15.

FARM SCRAP IS ESPECIALLY VALUABLE

The American farm is a good source of the iron and steel scrap needed for defense production. Steel mills especially need the higher grade, heavier types of scrap found on farms.

STEEL PRODUCTION DEPENDS ON SCRAP

Just as steel is the principal material in the production of such munitions as planes, tanks, and ships, scrap is one of the principal ingredients in making steel. Steel is made from approximately one-half scrap and one-half pig iron. Scrap adds to the quality of steel, helps to keep production costs down, and shortens the refining process. For every ton of scrap used, we conserve approximately two tons of iron ore, one ton of coal, nearly one ton of limestone, and other materials.

The many sources of scrap, in addition to farms, are being tapped. Efforts are being made to get more scrap from railroads, utilities, coal mines, special projects such as obsolete ships and abandoned bridges, auto wreckers, Government agencies, and foreign outlets.

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Meanwhile, steel mills are operating with a dangerously short supply of scrap. And with expected increases in steel production, their needs for scrap can be expected to mount. Steel production totaled 96,700,000 tons in 1950. By the end of 1952 total production capacity should be 118,000,000 tons, an increase of more than 20 percent.

COLLECTING SCRAP HAS ADVANTAGES FOR FARMER

Rounding up scrap does take the farmer's time and effort. And financial returns are not large from the sale of scrap. But prices now being paid are higher than those offered during World War II. Even some cash return is better than none at all when machinery rusts away in field or barn.

An adequate flow of iron and steel scrap to the steel industry also helps guarantee raw materials for the farm machinery and equipment industry. Only with enough iron and steel can farm machinery manufacturers keep farmers supplied with vital new mechanized and metallic equipment.

Collecting scrap around the farm is a clean-up job which makes for neatness and efficient working conditions.

Keeping scrap picked up and out of the way of farm workers and livestock is a safety measure. For example, small pieces of metal, such as baling wire, may get into hay and other forage crops and thus endanger animals that eat such feeds.

Autumn--when most harvests are completed--is a good time to check on scrap around the farm. The farmer has more time then, and it is the season for getting equipment in shape for the next planting season--or deciding to discard it.

WANTED--ONLY EQUIPMENT TOO WORN OUT TO RECONDITION

The scrap drive calls only for machinery and equipment which cannot be reconditioned. Farmers are urged to conserve and repair any machinery they can make do, for machinery conservation cuts down the demand for new metal equipment.

The primary need is for scrap items containing iron and steel. Some other metals--such as copper and lead--can be used, however. No household scrap drive is contemplated at this time.

It is usual to keep old implements around the farm in order to stri from them occasional bolts or other parts needed for repairing newe. machinery. But farmers can cooperate with the scrap drive by taking such parts from old machines, storing them, and scrapping the remain useless metal parts.

TAKE A LOOK AROUND THE FARMSTEAD.....

Among the farm items yielding scrap are plow points and shares, cultivator shovels and sweeps, other broken machine parts, horsedrawn equipment which has been replaced by tractors, old electric wire and cable where the farmhouse has been rewired, worn-out storage batteries, windmill and water tank towers which have been replaced by modern pressure systems.

Although heavier scrap is most desirable, wire and screening are more valuable as scrap than they used to be. More lightweight steel products are being made today. Accordingly, chicken wire and baling wire are also wanted. But farmers will do well to re-use baling wire when they can for both metal conservation and thrift.

SCRAP BEING BOUGHT THROUGH USUAL CHANNELS

Farmers can sell scrap through usual channels--their local scrap or junk dealers. Some of these call at farms periodically to collect scrap. Others have places of business in nearby towns or cities.

If farmers do not know the name of their local scrap dealer, they should consult the farm equipment dealer in their locality. The county agent, the PMA committeeman or other members of the County Agricultural Mobilization Committee will also have information about local dealers, as well as other facts concerning local scrap drives.

The NPA is working with scrap dealers throughout the country to assure prompt collection from rural as well as urban areas.

SCRAP PRICES DEPEND ON DEALERS, PREPARING AND SHIPPING COSTS

The prices farmers can get for their scrap depend a great deal on local scrap dealers. But it is well for farmers to know some of the ways dealers determine these prices.

First there is a wide range in the value of scrap. Steel companies buy scrap according to specifications set up by the U.S. Department of Commerce. These classify scrap in different ways, and prices vary from class to class. These prices can be no higher than the ceiling prices set by the Office of Price Stabilization, quoted for selected "basing points" or cities across the Nation.

In addition, scrap prices are affected by the cost of preparing scrap for handling and shipping and the actual cost of shipping as well. Scrap has to be sorted and graded by experienced men so it can be useful for different purposes at steel mills. Bulky scrap is compressed into bales. Heavy, awkward shapes are cut by torches and shears into material that can be bundled and shipped. The term "prepared scrap" applies to that which has been sorted and readied for shipping.

Shipping costs vary according to the distance from steel industrial centers. Not only do "basing point" ceiling prices allow for shipping differentials, but dealers must also allow for transporting scrap to "basing points". Further, Office of Price Stabilization ceilings apply to a wide variety of grades of scrap.

Before a fair price for scrap can be determined locally, a profit for the scrap dealer must also be figured in.

Some other factors also affect scrap prices. For example, farm scrap that has wooden parts removed or burned off would have greater value than that which has not been so treated. If not, the dealer would have to do this job, thus reducing the price to the farmer.